

Opening Statement
The Honorable Ralph M. Hall (R-TX), Chairman
Committee on Science, Space, and Technology
*An Overview of the Fiscal Year 2012 Budget Proposals at the National Science Foundation and
the National Institute of Standards and Technology*

March 11, 2011

I am pleased to discuss the fiscal year 2012 budget request for two agencies within the Science, Space, and Technology Committee's jurisdiction: the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST).

There is no denying that both of these agencies make vital contributions to our Nation's competitiveness, and this Committee has a long, bipartisan record of support for these agencies and their contributions.

The National Science Foundation's work is diverse and far-reaching. NSF investments have yielded bar codes, the sign language dictionary, MRIs, and *Google*. In the last year alone, the Foundation has supported research ranging from new techniques to combat the flu virus to sustaining the budding field of nanoelectronics to ways to minimize the negative impacts of sunspots on communication technology. NSF is the primary source of federal government support for our colleges and universities, as most NSF investments are for merit-based, peer-reviewed research conducted in university laboratories across the Nation. In fact, I suspect every one of our districts have benefitted from NSF funding in one form or the other.

The National Institute of Standards and Technology is a non-regulatory laboratory of the federal government tasked with innovation and industrial competitiveness by advancing measurement science, standards and technology. They work alongside industry to make sure their activities improve the quality of life of Americans and the economic security of our nation. Although we may not be aware of NIST's impact on our lives, their work is making things run smoothly for us, from online security to health information technology.

I note that the requests for both of these agencies in fiscal year 2012 are significant; NSF's budget would increase by 13 percent over fiscal year 2010's appropriation, and NIST's budget would increase by almost 17 percent. Given the current economic realities, I am greatly concerned that we simply cannot afford to continue spending at these rates.

I applaud the Administration's efforts to terminate ineffective programs and make reductions in worthy areas, but I am afraid these cuts and reductions do not go far enough, particularly when there are just as many new and/or duplicative programs created in the process. I also remain very concerned that the Administration continues to place a greater emphasis on specific applied research areas at these agencies whose core missions are and should remain basic, fundamental research.

Regardless, the Committee appreciates the opportunity to learn more about how fiscal year 2012 funds would be utilized by NSF and NIST, and I thank our witnesses for their time and flexibility in conducting this hearing today.